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UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
TREASURY DEPARTMENT

Original to [redacted] 2-22-54
[4825] [redacted]

ORIGIN Chief's Office | OFFICE Washington, D. C. | FILE NO. [illegible]

TYPE OF CASE	STATUS	TITLE OR CAPTION
White House Supplier	Closed	Harold Weisberg — White House Supply Source

INVESTIGATION MADE AT: Hyattstown & College Park, Md. Washington, D. C.
PERIOD COVERED: 10/11/54 - 12/8/54

INVESTIGATION MADE BY: Special Agent [redacted]
Special Agent [redacted]

DETAILS

Reference is made to office memorandum from the Chief to [redacted], Washington, D. C., dated October 13, 1954, requesting an investigation of Mr. Harold Weisberg as a possible supplier of poultry for the White House.

A synopsis of the salient facts in this investigation follows, since it was found that a rather lengthy and detailed inquiry was required to cover Mr. Weisberg and his poultry enterprise.

Harold D. Weisberg and his wife, Lillian Stone Weisberg, have resided on a small farm near Hyattstown, Maryland, since 1948 and have been engaged in raising and selling "pheasant chickens." Using the trade name "Coq d'Or," the Weisbergs sell their fowls to a rather limited and exclusive Washington market, catering to embassies, smart restaurants, and socially prominent private families.

Weisberg personally slaughters and freezes his chickens, and two women employees assist him in eviscerating them before they are frozen. Once frozen, the chickens are stored in the Southern States Cooperative lockers at Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Although the Weisberg farm is strewn with debris and is very unkempt looking to the passer-by, the actual processing of the poultry seems to be done in an adequately careful and sanitary manner.

[redacted] Supervisor of the Sanitation Division of Montgomery County, Maryland, reports that abattoir inspection and supervision is not presently in force in Montgomery County, although regulations were drawn in October 1954. Under present rules, the Weisberg farm will not be subject to health and sanitation inspection. However, Act 43, Section 205 of the Maryland Code calls for annual inspection of frozen food plants and this will embrace the Southern States Cooperative at Gaithersburg, Maryland.

DISTRIBUTION	COPIES	REPORT MADE BY	DATE
Chief Washington	Orig & 1 cc att. 1 cc	[redacted]	12/15/54
		APPROVED [redacted]	12/15/54

(CONTINUE ON PLAIN PAPER)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

[redacted] is the plant manager of the Southern States Cooperative at Gaithersburg and will be the man to contact there -- telephone Gaithersburg 190. He has five employees, all of whom have been there three or more years. There are three keys to each locker -- one retained by the renter, one by the plant manager, and a master key also in custody of the plant. [redacted] said he has known Weisberg six years through business dealings and is of the opinion that Weisberg's poultry are of a superior type and are well processed. He knows nothing concerning Weisberg which would label him a security risk.

Mr. Weisberg claims that his chickens are 1/16th pheasant, which allegedly combines the slight taste tang of game birds with the best flavors of the most select domestic breeds of chickens. While dismissing the genealogy of the pheasant chicken as a myth, authorities of the Division of Poultry Husbandry of the University of Maryland have acknowledged that Weisberg's chickens are superb eating and are definitely superior in quality to the run-of-mill fowl.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Weisberg are former Government employees, and a persistent odium of communistic affiliations followed them throughout most of that employment. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has a comprehensive report on them dated June 29, 1948, and from this, it has been learned that Mrs. Weisberg was a member of at least three communist front organizations and was under constant scrutiny by her employing agency. Mr. Weisberg was allegedly dropped from the LaFollette Senate Investigating Committee in 1939 for leaking news to the Daily Worker and for other questionable conduct. Mr. Weisberg was reputedly a close friend of Vito Marcantonio, the notoriously radical representative from New York City. Mr. Weisberg was also dropped from the State Department in 1947 as a security risk. He describes himself as a "Roosevelt Democrat," but some of his neighbors describe him as a radical and a communist.

[redacted], professor at the University of Maryland, Division of Poultry Husbandry, said Mr. Weisberg is apparently a very intelligent man and if he is selling his chickens with the insistence that they are actually "pheasant" chickens, he is guilty of misrepresentation.

Mr. Weisberg purposely caters to a select market and does not hesitate to publicize the fact that Mrs. John Foster Dulles and other well-known people are among his customers. There is

every indication that he will welcome the opportunity to be a purveyor to the White House and will use this status to enhance his commercial prestige.

Mr. Weisberg is amenable to any recommendations he may be requested to follow in supplying chickens to the White House. The chickens are stored in the frozen food lockers at Gaithersburg, and each chicken is wrapped in plio-film, with the weight and price written on a tag. An order should be placed a few days in advance by calling Mr. Weisberg at Gaithersburg 398-W-5 to make certain an adequate stock of proper size poultry is available. We can then call the frozen food plant manager and authorize him to open the Weisberg locker upon arrival of the White House pick-up driver. The driver can select the order from the stock and will be checked by the plant manager for billing. This appears to be the best procedure. However, if desired, an appointment can be made with Mr. Weisberg to be at the plant at a specified time to assist the White House driver in filling the order.

Mr. and Mrs. Weisberg and their employees have been checked against the files of the FBI, and a detailed report on the Weisbergs has been returned, copy of which accompanies this report. The files of the Montgomery County Police Department reflect no record of the Weisbergs or their employees. Files of the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D. C., disclose no criminal record of any of the group, but the Subversive Section has reports on Mr. Weisberg which are encompassed by the FBI report.

Inspection of the frozen food lockers at Gaithersburg has been made and the personnel there appear to be of high level. Sanitation conditions are excellent. The employees have not been screened to date, but this is in process and, in the event any derogatory information is received, it will be the subject of a supplemental report.

Harold D. Weisberg and His Farm

On October 23, 1954, SA [redacted] and the reporting agent interviewed Harold D. Weisberg and made an inspection of his farm at Hyattstown, Maryland. Mr. Weisberg has a fourteen acre tract located on Route 109 between U. S. Route 240 and the new Frederick - Washington express highway.

Mr. and Mrs. Weisberg are assisted in their operation of the poultry farm by two women and a retired farmer. The women, [redacted] help Mr. Weisberg eviscerate the chickens and clean them prior to freezing. [redacted] helps Mr. Weisberg in the outside work of feeding and caring for the chickens.

The outward appearance of the Weisberg residence and farm is very unkempt. The house is uncompleted and Mr. and Mrs. Weisberg live and work in the basement. The entire outside area is covered with litter of old building material, wheels, and junk of every description. The thought occurs to one that, if Weisberg would spend about one day cleaning up the area around the house, it would look quite presentable as the home itself is located in a rather charming natural setting.

The reporting agents were given a full tour of the farm by Mr. Weisberg and the entire operation from chick to freezer was explained to them. Mr. Weisberg gets his chicks from Waukesha, Wisconsin, and they are flown to Washington, D. C., by air express at the age of three days. He keeps them in incubators until sufficiently matured, and they are fed very high quality feed which has the scientific endorsement of the poultry experts of the University of Maryland. Mr. Weisberg's chicken coops appear to be adequate as to structure and capacity, and he uses a deep shredded sugar cane litter which is recommended to give poultry the cleanest and most sanitary living quarters. Mr. Weisberg uses controlled scientific feeding which brings the birds very rapidly to maturity so that tenderness will be retained with adequate size.

Mr. Weisberg explained that he kills the chickens at various sizes to satisfy individual customer's orders. He stated that Mrs. Dulles always orders a two pound dressed chicken, while the LaSalle Du Bois restaurant orders 3/4 to 1-1/4 pound birds for individual serving. The male birds are chemically caponized by inserting a small pellet of diethyl stilbesterol at the base of the brain. There has been some controversy over this method of caponizing, but [redacted] of the University of Maryland, Division of Poultry Husbandry, has asserted that the eating of this type of fowl has no deleterious effect on human beings.

Mr. Weisberg insists that his chickens are actually pheasant-chickens and by breed are 1/16th pheasant. This statement is unequivocally denied [redacted] entioned above, who says that large controlled experiments in this field have established that the continuing strain of pheasant characteristics cannot be maintained in domestic fowl. [redacted]id add, however, that he has inspected and eaten Mr. Weisberg's poultry, and he regards these chickens as being very definitely a superior breed.

When Mr. Weisberg has killed his chickens, they are most carefully cleaned, weighed, labeled, and frozen right at his farm. Later, they are transported to the Southern States Cooperative food locker at Gaithersburg, Maryland, and placed in Mr. Weisberg's private locker.

In regard to the lockers, Mr. Weisberg retains his personal key and the plant manager, [redacted], has a key to the Weisberg locker,

in addition to a master key which will open all of the lockers at the plant. Mr. Weisberg states that, in most instances, he personally takes his orders from his stock at the food locker and delivers them to his customers in Washington, D. C. However, on certain occasions, he will call [redacted] and authorize him to release an order to a customer who comes to the plant personally.

Background of Mr. and Mrs. Weisberg and Their Employees

The names of Mr. and Mrs. Harold D. Weisberg and their three employees, [redacted], were submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Subversive and Criminal, and to the House Un-American Activities Committee. No record was returned concerning the three employees. However, the FBI returned a [31-page] report of investigation on the Weisbergs dated [June 29, 1948.] (A copy of this report is transmitted with this report.)

From this report, it has been ascertained that both Mr. and Mrs. Weisberg were former Government employees and each of them, during that time, came under scrutiny and investigation as security risks. Mrs. Weisberg was alleged to be a member of three organizations which have been listed as subversive under Presidential Executive Order 9835. These include the League of Women Shoppers of Washington, the Washington Book Shop, and the Washington Committee for Democratic Action.

Mr. Weisberg was employed in the Civil Liberties Investigative Branch of the LaFollette Senate Committee and was dropped from this Committee in 1939 allegedly for leaking information to the Daily Worker and for improper conduct along subversive lines. Later, Mr. Weisberg, after a brief military service, was employed by the OSS. From there, he entered the State Department in 1945 and was employed by them as a Research Analyst, specializing in Latin American countries, until 1947 when he, with nine others, was dropped as a security risk, having been suspected of communism or communistic sympathies.

When the investigating agents were interviewing Harold D. Weisberg, he voluntarily stated that he was a "Roosevelt Democrat and New Dealer," but did not expand his political opinions otherwise.

[redacted], [redacted] at the village of Hyattstown, where Mr. Weisberg lives, was interviewed concerning Weisberg and spoke with considerable animosity. He said that Weisberg did not mix well with the local people and was generally regarded as a radical and a communist.

[redacted] at Hyattstown, was interviewed and echoed the same opinion of Weisberg, adding

that Mrs. Weisberg's family has virtually ostracized Mr. Weisberg and regard him as a radical.

One thing was noted during the interview with all of the persons who were questioned about Weisberg -- they all remarked that Weisberg is very proud of his clientele and does not hesitate to tell any visitors or prospective customers that he is a purveyor to Mrs. John Foster Dulles and other prominent persons in Washington, D. C.

Files of the U. S. Civil Service Commission were reviewed, and no additional derogatory information was obtained concerning Mr. or Mrs. Weisberg. Files of the OSS were reviewed and contained no derogatory information concerning Mr. Weisberg.

Inquiry was made at the State Department, Security Section, and it was reported there that they had no file on Mr. Weisberg.

Files of the Montgomery County Police and the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D. C., were checked, and no record was disclosed on Mr. or Mrs. Weisberg or their three employees.

Health and Sanitation

As previously described in this report, the actual processing of poultry by Mr. Weisberg appears to be done in a satisfactorily sanitary manner. [redacted] of the Division of Poultry Husbandry, University of Maryland, were interviewed and both stated that they have visited Mr. Weisberg's farm and, as far as they can determine, adequate health and sanitation standards are maintained there in the processing of the chickens. Both of these gentlemen stated that Mr. Weisberg's poultry are superior in taste, appearance, and packaging, and they recommend them very highly.

The Montgomery County Health Department has no provision for the inspection of Mr. Weisberg's food processing. However, under Maryland State law, frozen food plants must be inspected once a year, and the Southern States Cooperative at Gaithersburg would come within this purview.

[redacted] inspected the Southern States Cooperative at Gaithersburg and has described it as being a very clean and well-kept modern plant with unusually high-type employees. He also interviewed [redacted] the plant manager, who stated that he has known Mr. Weisberg about six years through his dealings at the locker. [redacted] said he knew nothing derogatory regarding Weisberg and knows of no Communistic tendencies. Insofar as his poultry is concerned [redacted] states that Weisberg packages a very fine chicken, and he is of the opinion that Weisberg maintains good health standards in preparing his chickens for market.

Purchasing Recommendations

From the system used by Mr. Weisberg in marketing his chickens, it is desired that any order placed with him by the White House be telephoned to his residence, Gaithersburg 39-W-5, at least a week in advance to insure that he will have an adequate stock of the desired size of chickens on hand. Arrangements should be made to have the White House pick-up driver go to the Southern States Cooperative frozen food lockers at Gaithersburg and obtain the order there from the open stock. He will be assisted by the plant manager, Mr [redacted] who will have been apprised of the order by Mr. Weisberg. If desired, appointment can be made at the time the order is placed to have Mr. Weisberg meet the driver at the frozen food locker to assist him in selecting the order.

Names and addresses of the employees of the Southern States Cooperative have been submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the House Un-American Activities Committee for name checks. In the event any derogatory information is developed, it will be the subject of a supplemental report.

JHJ:amz